



Madge Mohi in Papua New Guinea.

Madge Mohi is one of two Maori volunteers lecturing at teachers' training colleges in Papua New Guinea. She is on the staff of St. Paul's Teachers College in Vunakanau, near Rabaul, provincial capital of the large off-shore island of New Britain.

Going from Ruatoria to Vunakanau was like moving to another rural scene. Half an hour away, Rabaul provides insights to a developing country's urban life in what is considered to be one of the more beautiful areas of the Pacific. However, Madge keeps a wary eye on Rabaul's active volcano.

She has enjoyed the stimulation of working with Papua New Guinea trainee teachers but has found the male dominated society can be restrictive. She cannot, for example, move around as easily as she would like to visit students' villages.



Mere Rankin in Papua New Guinea.

Mere Rankin, of Whakatane, is the second Maori volunteer working as a teacher's college lecturer in Papua New Guinea, this time at St. Benedict's at Wewak, on the north-eastern coast, in the East Sepik Province.

Bringing up a family and many years teaching experience have helped her contribute in such areas as the Community Life Syllabus Advisory Committee for which she recently travelled down to the capital, Port Moresby.

Mere, a former senior teacher and deputy principal of Kowarau Central School, is bringing some Maori culture to the East Sepik. She led some other New Zealanders in practising Maori songs and dances for a local performance which was well received, and at a primary school where she spoke on New Zealand, she was the first Maori the children had seen. After overcoming their shyness they asked many questions, she said.

"I did wonder why they glanced at me in passing with a questioning look though; I thought I could quite easily have passed for a Papua New Guinean", Mere said.



Heather Tipene in Western Samoa.

Turangi school teacher Heather Tipene recognised the similarities and differences between her own Polynesian heritage and that of Western Samoans, in her assignment based near Apia.

There are differences in teaching too — but she doesn't mind about a lack of some facilities, when the pupils are keen. She is so keen that she has extended her assignment to a third year.

Away from Levaula College, where she lives and teaches, Heather has taken part in sporting activities like netball, again adjusting to Samoan conditions and helped coach a marching team for the South Pacific Games in Apia this year.

Volunteer water supplies technician, Heta Thompson, of Te Aroha, one of VSA's previous Maori volunteers, who ended his assignment in Solomon Islands recently. Here he checks the only outlet from the 5000-gallon concrete block water tank he and a work crew constructed for a village near Auki on the large island of Malaita. The single tap is a deliberate water conservation measure.



Margaret Pahuru in Solomon Islands.

The ability to coach in a number of sports has also helped Margaret Pahuru, of Hicks Bay, East Coast, who is now teaching English and maths at Luesaleba Provincial Secondary School on Santa Cruz Island in the eastern Temotu Province of Solomon Islands. She exchanged classes at Edgecumbe Primary School for this remote boarding school of 300 pupils, which is reached by powered canoe, 1½ hours down the coast from the small provincial centre of Lata.

She and another VSA teacher at Luesaleba assist with the library and as well as sports coaching, the girls have asked Margaret to teach them some Maori songs — no problem for one who ran the school's Maori cultural group at Edgecumbe.

There have been others in the past and it is hoped more will follow — Maori volunteers who have contributed not only skills but a particular cultural identity from Aotearoa, New Zealand.

They have taken part in other cultures, seen how change affects lifestyles and in the tradition of volunteering, will have increased the understanding and acceptance of diversity both at home and in other parts of the Pacific.

